



## Amarante Youth Centre

### CHANGE! Good practice factsheet

Title of good practice/initiative	Image/photo of good practice/initiative
<p>CASA DA JUVENTUDE DE AMARANTE // Youth Centre</p> 	

**Description** of the good practice /initiative: history, activities, number of involved people, territorial scope, current scale, future plans, impact and benefits (**Max. 400 words**)

Casa da Juventude de Amarante is a Youth Centre/Hostel managed by Aventura Marão Clube (AMC), a local non-profit association created in 1993 by a group of young people of Amarante (actually AMC has 480 members). AMC's main aim is to promote a healthy way of life among the population (especially Youth) and nowadays runs three different sections: Mountain Bikes, Canoeing and Fair Trade. Under this last one AMC opened in 1999 the first Portuguese fair trade shop and participates in actions of promotion and training at national and international youth programs and also organizes, since 2000, international Workcamps about different themes such as environmental preservation, archaeology or fair trade. Since November 2008 we run Casa da Juventude de Amarante (Youth Centre and Hostel) and we are quite involved in Youth in Action (Youth Exchanges, Training Courses, EVS, etc.), LLL (Grundtvig, LDV, etc.) and new Erasmus+ YA. In the last years we coordinated around 70 projects involving more than 600 local youngsters in volunteering and international mobility. By so we are quite engaged promoting Europe and its values to the local youth community. Recently we approved our strategic plan for 2014-2020 that sustain the experience and knowledge that we collected and also take into consideration the SWOT analysis we've done by the end of 2013 allowing us to conclude that:

- We need to find innovative approaches to involve our local youngsters (as Amarante is a departure and not arrivals place, with quite large scale of young people unmotivated and jobless, just activity users and without entrepreneurship culture/skills);
- We should harness the positive image (window of opportunity) we have with young people and local community to, first of all, obtain more feedback about the needs in order to function as a reference and also leverage the existing technical capacity of local partner institutions;
- It is essential to promote the European dimension and frame funding opportunities arising from new EU support frameworks with particular emphasis on the Erasmus+ YA Program 2014-2020.

Taking this into account the strategy adopted should meet the identified needs and seize new opportunities available, fitting in both cases the priorities arising from the vision we have for this space / concept. The implementation of this strategy should be based on educational approaches that privileges Non Formal Education (NFE) as a methodology and encourage the use of experiential methods (learning by doing), surprising activities (art/provocation), including information and communication technologies (ICT), and finally, using music and outdoor activities (sports and nature) as tools for more active involvement of young people in our activities.

Finally, and despite being essential to monitor the identified needs and adapt our actions to the policies and priorities that define the context in which we work, we cannot neglect the strategic pillars we

consider and give coherence and support to our work:

- a) Healthy lifestyles (food and sport);
- b) Sustainable development (in the fields of organic farming, local consumption and fair trade);
- c) Human Rights Education;
- d) Innovation and Creativity;
- e) Intercultural dialogue, mainly with partners from out of Europe: Africa and Caucasus.

**Brief description of how the specific local public service has been challenged (with figures, if possible)**

In Portugal Youth Centres/Hostels are managed by the local/state authorities (municipalities or Youth National Structure – IPDJ/Movijovem). Ours is a study case and example of good practices as it results from an agreement (lease agreement) between a private association (AMC) and the local municipality (building’s owner) to develop youth policies and participation and mobility of youngsters. Since 2009 the numbers are quite clear:

- 77 EU approved projects, mainly under Erasmus+ YA (income of 1,6 million € for local economy);
- More than 600 local youngsters involved in international participation and mobility projects;
- More than 3000 foreigners at least for one week in Amarante for education and mobility projects;
- At least 100 international partners all over the world;
- Every year around 20 EVS volunteers developing community and social services.

**Role of the municipality** within the process (e.g. how the municipality facilitates or coordinates the process to systematise/upscale a civic initiative)

The municipality of Amarante gave the building and the equipment to AMC; It gives a subsidy of 10,000 euros per year. Furthermore, funding training that AMC gives sports and youth associations and volunteers. It contributes about 25 thousand euros year.

**Budget** (in total and municipality’s own contribution)

2015 overall budget was 407 thousand € and we expect half a million on 2016. From those around 3€ comes from EU projects. Local municipality contribution (subsidies) represents less than 2,5%.

**Key attributes (success factors)** enabling (municipal) staff to implement the project successfully

- Good national and international contacts in the Youth sector;
- Strong motivation and experienced staff on project and youth management;
- Alternative approach and values (respect among youth and partners).

**Key internal, organisational, behavioural weaknesses** the municipality/organisation had to overcome during the process

- Lack of experience managing a centre/hostel;
- Lack of credibility (as we were a small local association) in front of the local social network;
- Coordination issues with municipality.

**Links** to website for further information on the good practice/initiative

[www.cj-amarante.org](http://www.cj-amarante.org)  
[www.facebook.com/cjamarante](https://www.facebook.com/cjamarante)